

# *Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons*

## *See Red on the High Seas*

Standard:

II. Time, Continuity, and Change  
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions  
IX. Global Connections

Grade Level:

9–12 (*Note:* art and expression)

Objectives:

The student will:

- Express feelings through art work
- Read and create terms and ideas from Jefferson's Embargo Act
- Explain or express the feelings Jefferson may have had dealing with challenges to his foreign policy artistically and in writing

Time:

1½ class periods

Materials:

Documents: **1807** *Embargo Act*

Sheets of canvas paper (can be purchased in tablet form)  
Plastic wrap from dry cleaning bags  
Brushes  
Acrylic paints in basic colors  
Tables  
Plastic tablecloths (can be purchased at the dollar store)  
Collection of cutouts of ships  
Plastic spoons, forks, and straws  
Dark ink pens for outlining or writing words  
Elmer's glue (or similar) with water or a medium for glazing the canvas  
3"x 5" white index cards

Procedures:

### *Setting the Stage for Expression*

The unending state of war between Great Britain and France caused constant trouble for President Thomas Jefferson. True, American trade was booming, but both sides felt free to attack American ships and/or impress American sailors on the high seas. Jefferson had no choice but to put a stop to this violation of American rights. His solution was an Embargo Act to remove Americans from that trading arena. The result was outrage from American merchants, who saw their profits vanish.

This lesson includes artwork that is easy for both students and teachers. Using acrylic paints and canvas paper, students will create a piece that interprets Jefferson's anger at the violation of American rights. In order words, his "seeing red."

*Pre-Lesson*

As homework, direct the students to find images of ships, ferryboats, packets, flats, boats, and other vessels in bays, sounds, rivers, and lakes and bring them to class on the lesson day.

*Day One: Procedures*

- 1.** Distribute copies of the *Embargo Act* and ask students to note all of the details related to ships, ferryboats, packets, flats, boats, and vessels in bays, sounds, rivers, and lakes. Instruct them to make a list of terms that describes the details of the act and keep them on a piece of paper.
- 2.** While they are reading, lay out the art supplies or better yet solicit the help of the art teacher to come and help with the art in this lesson. If possible, conduct the activity in the art room.
- 3.** Cover several tables with plastic tablecloths and lay out the brushes, spoons, forks, as well as the images of the ships and sea-going vessels.
- 4.** As students finish reading the full *Embargo Act* give each a sheet of canvas paper.
- 5.** Students should follow these directions:



- a.** Pour paint on the canvas sheet and move it around, either by blowing with the straw, using the spoon and fork, manipulating the paint with plastic wrap, or even by moving the sheet of canvas. The canvas should be filled with various designs, lines, and colors.
  - b.** Insert small pieces of the ship cutouts. Students may use brushes to integrate the edges of the cutouts into their design.
  - c.** Let dry overnight or until the next class period.
  - d.** Using pens, write in key words and details from the *Embargo Act*, noted earlier. Then coat the canvas with glaze (2 parts white glue and 1 part water, mixed well.) If the art teacher has a pre-made glaze medium, use that instead.
- 6.** Have students give their art work a title and then, using the same title, write a story about the events that made Jefferson see "red." (The writing may lead the student to want to add something else to the "masterpiece.")



*A completed canvas—NR Cope*

*Day Two: Procedures*

- 1.** After the students have finished their stories, have them condense them to one 3" x 5" white card, which will be attached to the creation for the exhibition.
- 2.** Either have the class set up the exhibit or solicit the help of the Art Club. ■